

2010 ROSTERED LAY PROFESSIONAL COMPENSATION GUIDELINES SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD

INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to guide and assist in the Rostered Lay Professional/Congregation dialogue which leads to fair and just compensation for professional services in congregational settings. These guidelines represent a distinct shift in focus from giving specific numbers (dollar figures) to giving specific step-by-step guidance on how to create a climate of dialogue between Rostered Lay Professionals and congregation. The guidelines describe an ongoing process of review, accountability, and constructive conversation about what is fair and just compensation for effective professional leadership within a congregation. It is now expected that a part of the dialogue between Rostered Lay Professionals and congregations will include research of salaries of comparable professionals within the geographical area of the congregation. Rostered Lay salaries should be within the range of salaries for positions requiring equivalent educational levels and similar levels of responsibilities. Salaries should also be adjusted for acquired skills and performance, rather than being tied primarily to years of service. Additionally, salaries and reimbursable expenses are to be determined by agreed upon duties and responsibilities, accountability, performance, and annual review. That annual ministry review, based on mutual expectations and goals, incorporates evaluation of performance, both the Rostered Lay Professional and the congregation.

1.0 PROCESS

1.1 A New Way Of Thinking

These guidelines ask both Rostered Lay Professional and congregation to venture together toward fair and just compensation for the professional ministry. This document does not give hard and fixed numbers. It is a document that begins and guides in the Rostered Lay Professional-congregation dialogue. Simply put, inflexible and rigid numbers cannot compensate for the wide variety of economic and situational differences that span this geographically large Synod. The task of fair and just compensation for our Rostered Lay Professionals becomes even more complex because of the variety of ministries that are engaged in by both full and part time lay professionals. These facts have led to the development of a series of issues a congregation and its Rostered Lay Professional need to discuss in open and faithful dialogue. Our Synod Rostered Lay Professional Compensation Guidelines are a roadmap to guide discussion in the formation of a compensation package that is both open and reasoned. They are all about ongoing dialogue!

1.2 A Little History

The Southwestern Texas Synod Leadership Support Committee developed this document as a way to apply both sound business and current management principles to the task of rostered lay compensation. The Committee examined many compensation guidelines from across the ELCA as well as other Christian denominations and industry and government standards. Rostered Lay Professionals provided input used in the development of these guidelines. A wide variety of issues and approaches were reviewed and analyzed. Compensation for Rostered Lay Professionals is much more difficult to standardize than that of the ordained clergy because of the greater diversity of positions held by persons on these rosters, the wide variety in required and actual levels of education, and the low numbers of people currently on these rosters.

1.3 Implementation

For purposes of definition, Rostered Lay Professionals fall into three distinctive groups; Associates in Ministry (AIMs), Diaconal Ministers (DMs), and Deaconesses. All three have rostered status within the ELCA. These AIM's and DM's have a prescribed amount of education, supervised field experience, and other specified training. These individuals have

also been examined and certified by a Candidacy Committee. Every Rostered Lay Professional serves under the terms of a Letter of Call with approval from the Synodical Bishop.

Associates in Ministry have specialized skills and training in ministry such as education, music and the arts, administration, service and general ministries. They have a B. A. or equivalent or an M. A. in a field appropriate for the primary service area and are commissioned by the ELCA.

Deaconesses are a community of women centered in spiritual and professional growth and support. Primary areas of service include nursing, social work, and parish ministry. They have a degree appropriate to their primary service area and are consecrated by the ELCA.

Diaconal Ministers have received theological and practical training for ministry of the word that is carried out in service beyond the congregations of the ELCA. They may serve through congregations, agencies and institutions of the ELCA or in non-church related organizations. Diaconal Ministers have a Masters level theological degree and are consecrated by the ELCA.

As much as it would be helpful, there is no way to develop a perfect system of salary guidelines that meets the needs of every rostered lay minister and congregation. These guidelines seek to develop an approach that addresses the diversity of these Rostered Lay Professionals. Our purpose is to propose an approach which facilitates conversation between congregational leadership and Rostered Lay Professional ministers that is face-to-face, healthy, constructive, and future-oriented. We want to be moving toward healthy relationships.

The call of a congregation, with acceptance of that call by a Rostered Lay Professional, constitutes a mutual relationship and commitment. Service in a call to ministry in a congregation is different in some ways from an employer/employee relationship. This document is a model and tool from the Southwestern Texas Synod to assist congregations during the process of an annual review of rostered lay compensation leading to the formation of a congregational budget. Congregations of this Synod are expected to use this document and its supporting appendices to address concerns related to Rostered Lay Professional compensation.

The guidance is simple. Congregation and Rostered Lay Professionals establish what is fair and just compensation in their setting, considering all factors and expertise of the lay professional, regardless of the congregation's ability to meet that obligation. If only a percentage of what is fair and just compensation is currently attainable by a congregation, these steps should be followed: the congregation and lay professional develop written strategies (copied to the Synod office) that work toward their ability to appropriately compensate their Rostered Lay Professional. Compensation should be adjusted annually to meet the agreed upon level. In lieu of that ability, work load or hours should be adjusted to match the percentage of compensation made available to the Rostered Lay Professional. Sharing a Rostered Lay Professional between two or more congregations may be a viable strategy to attain fair and just compensation. Resources and assistance are available from the Synod to help congregations engage in this conversation.

1.4 Areas of Consideration

- Mutual Accountability and Performance
- Fair and Just Compensation
- Pension and Health Care Benefits
- Expense Reimbursement
- Renewal and Wellness
- Professional Development

2.0 MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Both the Rostered Lay Professional and the congregation are expected to hold each other mutually accountable for the ministry that is done in their community.

2.1 Responsibilities and Annual Review

At the time of call, and annually thereafter, the appropriate committee and the Rostered Lay Professional's immediate supervisor will establish his/her job responsibilities and priorities, will establish the congregation's duties, and will agree upon a method to measure each other's ministry performance. This will include an annual review of the Rostered Lay Professional's job description, a process for the Lay Professional to regularly report his/her activities, and a process for regularly assessing the congregational support of the Lay Professional's ministry. See **Appendix**.

2.2 Mutual Ministry Committee

The ELCA Model Constitution for congregations recommends the appointment of a Mutual Ministry Committee. Composed of mature, healthy and faith-centered people, this group focuses on the healthy practice of mutuality in ministry among all people, including the Rostered Lay Professional. As one part of its ministry, this group provides care for the Lay Professional in his or her unique role among all the people. Normally the committee is appointed in consultation between the council president and pastor. Resources are available on the Synod Website.

2.3 Personnel Committee

This committee carries out the obligations of the congregation as the *employer*, including annual compensation review, using these guidelines as the basis for the review. Recommended compensation is determined in conversation with the Rostered Lay Professional. Compensation recommendations go to the Congregation Council for action. The Executive Committee may function as the Personnel Committee. Resources are available on the Synod Website

3.0 FAIR AND JUST COMPENSATION

3.1 Comparable Professional Compensation

Associates in Ministry (AIM), Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers (DM) are on the roster of the ELCA. Therefore, in matters of compensation and benefits, these lay employees are similar in many respects to pastors. Major differences arise from the unique federal tax treatment given pastors.

Compensation for lay rostered professionals should be comparable to other professionals in the local community of similar education and responsibilities in organizations that are not-for-profit, rendering a service to society. Salaries should also be adjusted for acquired skills, educational degrees, performance, and additional responsibilities.

One useful community standard is the compensation level of elementary and middle school assistant principals. Information regarding salary ranges for these professionals may be found online on your local school district's web site, or by calling the local school district. Variations in cost of living will be reflected in these salary ranges. It is highly encouraged that more than one nearby school district and other master's degree professionals' compensation levels be used for comparison.

See **Appendix** for salary range information for middle school assistant principals.

3.2 Advocacy for Your Lay Rostered Professional

Recognizing that the whole people of God seek fairness and justice in compensation, there are times when having an advocate for the lay rostered professional is mutually beneficial. This may be the role of the Personnel Committee, or at times the Mutual Ministry committee, or others, who then advocate with those who recommend salaries.

3.3 Housing and Clergy Taxes

The Clergy housing allowance, which is compensation paid to the clergy, is not subject to federal income tax. This benefit is not available to Lay Rostered Professionals.

3.4 Social Security

All rostered lay church staff are considered *employees* for Social Security purposes. The lay staff employee and the congregation pay equally into the system as provided by law. In 2010, this amount is 7.65% of salary. School districts are not required (and most choose not) to participate in Social Security. The Social Security contribution is an added benefit given to the lay professional that is not received by most school employees. This difference should be considered when comparing total compensation of the lay professional to that of the assistant principal.

4.0 PENSION AND HEALTHCARE BENEFITS

Congregations are to provide for participation in the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Plan at least at the levels prescribed by the ELCA Board of Pensions. In order to ensure adequate retirement income for all Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers, any congregation paying salary below guidelines is advised to make pension payments based on recommended salary guidelines in this document. The minimum level of pension contribution for *rostered* lay leaders is 10% of salary, before any pretax benefit contributions are deducted.

Congregations will also provide for medical and dental benefit plan coverage for spouse and/or children unless the spouse and/or children are already enrolled through the spouse's employer. Rostered leaders and congregations who agree to secure health insurance for the rostered leader through a spouse's employer may waive Board of Pension health care coverage. Congregations should pay 100% of the cost to the rostered leader of participation in the spouse's plan. Medical / dental insurance cost information may be obtained on the Board of Pensions Web site: www.elcabop.org. (Click on "Calculators").

Participation in the ELCA Board of Pensions health plan provides for mobility of Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers across the church, without the difficulty of obtaining new health insurance with each new call.

Rostered leaders are encouraged to participate in the ELCA Board of Pensions' Flexible Spending Accounts and Personal Wellness Accounts. See **Appendix**.

5.0 EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

It is expected that reasonable and customary expenses that are incurred in the course of ministry will be reimbursed or provided for directly by the congregation.

5.1 Travel Expenses

It is expected that the congregation will provide for the cost of all travel done by the Associate in Ministry, Deaconess, or Diaconal Minister, in connection with his or her service to the congregation, including travel expenses for continuing education and synod and other meetings associated with his or her service as a rostered leader of the ELCA. Such expenses would normally include reimbursement for the operation of a vehicle, tolls, meals, lodging and gratuities while involved in travel.

Reimbursement for automobile expenses should be made according to current IRS limits.

In some cases, rostered leaders and congregations have found it advantageous to supply a leased automobile (with fuel, insurance and maintenance) for the rostered leader's business use instead of expense reimbursement.

In many cases travel by air is the better stewardship of the rostered leader's time and the congregation's funds when a long trip is required.

5.2 Professional Expenses

A congregation should provide for items that the lay rostered leader and the congregation agree are to the benefit of the professional ministry. Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers have routine expenses such as the purchase and care of robes, books, and other professional expenses. A set annual limit on professional expense reimbursement may be agreed to each year.

6.0 RENEWAL AND SELF-CARE

6.1 Vacation

Vacation time of a minimum of 2 weeks per year. See **Appendix**.

6.2 Sick Leave and Disability

Sick leave recommendation is one day a month, cumulative to 60 days. Disability compensation of up to two months in a 12-month period and contributions to the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program should be provided in the event that the Rostered Lay Professional is physically or mentally disabled. See **Appendix**.

No sick leave or disability time should be considered cumulative or compensated for at the end of a call.

6.3 Family Leave

Where applicable, parental leave of up to 6 weeks with full salary and benefits should be provided at the time of the birth or adoption of a child.

Caring for children and parents is part of faithful living. Like others, Rostered Lay Professionals are to act responsibly in living out such care. Family leave of up to 2 weeks for care of a spouse, son, daughter, or parent for a medical emergency, serious health condition, or bereavement should be provided with full salary and benefits.

No family leave is cumulative. It should be used sparingly and always in consultation with congregational leadership.

7.0 MUTUAL BENEFIT

7.1 Professional Development

Professional Development time of 2 weeks per year, including 2 Sundays, is recommended. Professional Development allowance of \$1,000 per year is recommended. At a minimum, \$700 should be provided. In addition to the amount the congregation provides, the Lay rostered employee is expected to contribute funds toward his or her continuing professional development. Professional Development time and funds may be accumulated up to three years, as reflected in an agreement developed by the Rostered person and Congregation Council. See **Appendix**.

7.2 Sabbatical

Sabbatical leave, at regular intervals, for extended study and a time of renewal is an important consideration for Lay Rostered Personnel. This enables a more complete time for continuing development in our fast changing world. Sabbatical time of 3 months for every 7 years of ministry, and after at least 4 years of service in the current call, is highly encouraged. See **Appendix**.

APPENDIX

2.0 MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

2.1 Annual Ministry Review

An annual review is normally conducted with the Rostered Lay Professional and appropriate committee. The review is held in a time of the year separated from the congregation's budget process. This review with the Rostered Lay Professional is conducted in the context of an assessment of the ministry of the entire congregation.

As part of the process, goals and priorities of the Rostered Lay Professional from the previous year are evaluated and those for the coming year are established.

3.1 Comparable Professional Compensation

The place to begin in determining fair and just compensation is by gathering data for jobs in the area that compare, generally, to that of a lay rostered professional's level of responsibility. For example, Elementary or Middle School Assistant Principals would have similar levels of responsibility and qualifications. A congregation must explore different positions in order to derive a factual and complete understanding of area comparable salary ranges. The two examples below represent the kind of research a congregation should be doing. They show the 2009-2010 salary ranges for elementary and middle school principals in 2 districts in San Antonio. The job responsibilities and qualifications for these positions are also summarized. If the highest degree of the Rostered Lay Professional is a Bachelor's degree, then teachers' salaries may be used for comparison rather than Assistant Principals.

			Low	Mid	High	Work Schedule
NEISD Principal	Elementary	Asst.	\$57,600	\$64,150	\$70,700	Eleven months

Minimum Qualifications:

Master's degree

Four to ten years combination of education and experience

Certification (superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal or mid-management

Valid teaching certificate

Major Responsibilities:

Assists principal in overall administration of instructional program

Coordinates assigned student activities and services

Participates in development and evaluation of programs

Observes employee performance and conducts evaluation conferences

Supervises operations in absence of principal

Participates in development of class schedules and teacher assignments

Supervises reporting and monitoring of student attendance

Conducts conferences with parents, students, and teachers

Low	Mid	High	Work
-----	-----	------	------

				Schedule
NISD Middle School Assist. Prin.	\$54,300	\$61,350	\$68,400	202 work days

Minimum Qualifications:

Master's degree
 Minimum three years experience as a classroom teacher
 Texas mid-management or other appropriate Texas certificate

Major Responsibilities:

Develop and maintain rules and regulations governing student behavior
 Observes employee performance and conducts evaluation conferences
 Coordinates substitute teachers
 Supervises student activities
 Supervises campus/cafeteria before and after school
 Assists in development of teacher handbook
 Assists in attendance counting
 Maintain accurate textbook and campus inventory records
 Monitor lesson plans
 Monitor parking, lockers, and detention hall

4.0 PENSION AND HEALTHCARE BENEFITS

Flexible Spending Account (FSA) A flexible Spending Account is a type of cafeteria plan that enables a lay rostered leader to set aside payroll dollars on a pre-tax basis to pay for certain out-of-pocket expenses, including:
 Certain health care expenses that are not paid for or reimbursed under the ELCA Health Benefits Plan or other health coverage; and
 Eligible dependent day care expenses.

Note: Members must enroll prior to the year the plan is used. Employers send member's contributions to the Board of Pensions and the Health Plan Administrator administers account balances and reimbursements. Any unused balance at the end of the year remains with the health plan.

6.0 RENEWAL AND SELF-CARE

6.1 Vacation

For 1-4 years of call, two weeks of paid vacation are recommended; for years 5-7, three weeks; and for 8 years and over, four weeks.

Vacation time is to be used within the calendar year, except by agreement with the Congregation Council in advance.

Time spent in outdoor ministry or retreats with congregational groups should not be considered as vacation time when it is part of the church's program.

If Sunday duties are required of the Rostered Lay Professional, in addition to vacation time, at least one full day off per week should be taken.

6.2 Sick Leave and Disability

The ELCA Board of Pensions guidelines concerning disability require the employer to provide two months compensation before the Rostered Lay Professional is eligible for disability

coverage from the ELCA Board of Pensions. www.elcabop.org has further information about disability matters.

7.0 MUTUAL BENEFIT

7.1 Professional Development

With its history of educated and well-trained personnel, the ELCA expects Lay Rostered personnel to participate in ongoing Professional Development. This allows for the sharpening professional skills, personal development and spiritual enrichment which will enhance program delivery. Continuing education time is not considered part of vacation time.

Each year the Lay Rostered continuing professional development plan is best developed in conversation with the appropriate supervisor, committee and/or Congregation Council.

Professional development may range from a single day seminar to enrollment in a formal program at an educational institution.

First Call Theological Education, a three year program of the ELCA required for newly rostered leaders, is approximately 25 contact hours per year in this Synod. It is part of professional development for purposes of time away and expenses incurred.

Because these funds are specifically for professional development, any unused funds are not given to the employee. Unused professional time is not to be compensated.

If there are any costs for replacement needs during the lay rostered person's absence for professional development, they are paid by the congregation.

7.2 Sabbatical

The lay rostered person is provided full salary, pension and other benefits during sabbatical. The sabbatical is in lieu of the year's annual two weeks of professional development time. The congregation is responsible to provide for coverage during the absence.

Experience has shown that the congregation benefits from sabbatical study, growth and renewal from this stimulation and grounding process.

Other optional rhythms for consideration of sabbatical time range from one to three months every three to seven years.

Planning and budgeting for sabbatical should begin at least one year in advance. A detailed sabbatical plan should be presented to Congregation Council for approval at least three months in advance.

The lay rostered person should agree to remain in the congregation for a minimum of six months following the sabbatical.

Professional development funds may be used for sabbatical. Additional expenses are normally the responsibility of the individual.